

The setting in this book is set in Syracuse, New York, and the main Character, Melinda attends Merryweather High School, where majority of the book takes place. The school has many cliques and Melinda is not in any of them.

Melinda Sordino is the main character, and she is a freshman at Merryweather High School. Melinda is also a social outcast because of an incident that occurred that previous summer. She is very quiet, in fact, she rarely speaks. Melinda's biology lab partner is David, and is one of the few students in the school who will speak to her. She comes to admire him very much for his brilliance; and his willingness to stand up for what is right. Finally, Mr. Freeman is Melinda's art teacher who has his own issues with a school board, who will provide him with no supplies with which to teach. However, he is the only adult who tries to understand Melinda's pain and encourages her to stand up for what she believes. He offers an ear to listen and a shoulder to cry on if Melinda ever needs him. In the end, he also is one of those that help her find her way to speaking again.

I would definitely say that I am very different from Melinda! I know she has gone through a lot, but even so, I could never do what she did for a whole school year. I love talking with people about my feelings, and just in general. I also feel I am confident enough to tell people if I had ever been assaulted.

Speak is a great book, especially for middle school age kids going through rough times. I feel the character in the book is very relatable to, and she is very sarcastic. Melinda is a freshman in high school, and is going through a difficult time dealing with a situation that occurred the summer before her freshman year. A few weeks before her freshman year of high school,

Melinda and her friend Rachel are invited to a high school party. There, Melinda was drunk and meets a senior, Andy Evans, who rapes her. She calls 911 and the police break up the party for underage drinking, arresting some of the kids. Alone, Melinda walks miles home to an empty house. In the following weeks she tells no one what happened and no one realizes she was raped. From this incident, Melinda becomes very depressed, and very alone. All her friends and the party-goers are angry with her for getting them into trouble, and shun her once school starts.

As Melinda's depression worsens, she begins to skip school, and withdraws from her parents. She is very sarcastic about her teachers, and she even stops going to classes because she is so appalled by her teachers. She creates a hide-away in an abandoned janitor's closet at school, where she sleeps during the day or hides when she is feeling anxious. In her closet, she hangs her art work. Her only solace is art class, taught by Mr. Freeman, who encourages his students to express themselves. Over time, Mr. Freeman seems to have an impact on Melinda's view of things. When the school year is almost over, she befriends David Petrakis, her lab partner. She also begins to question her feelings about him. In the mist of all that has happened, Melinda finds out that her former best friend, Rachel, begins dating Andy, and she feels obligated to tell her about the rape. Rachel completely denies Melinda's story and becomes outraged.

As the school year comes to a close, Melinda returns to her janitor's closet to gather some things she left inside it. Andy confronts her, accusing her of fabricating the assault, saying that she consented and is jealous of his relationship with Rachel. When he attempts to rape her again, she screams, breaks a mirror, and tells him no. Fortunately, Melinda's former friend Nicole and the lacrosse team hear her scream from the closet and come to her aid. On the last day of school, Melinda stays late to finish her art project and finishes the course with an A+, though she is facing summer school for failing the rest of her classes. As the student body hears the story and

realizes the truth about what happened at the party, Melinda goes from social outsider to something of a hero. Mr. Freeman prompts her to tell him her story, helping Melinda to finally come to terms with what happened to her and move on with her life.

Overall, I understood the book, but I wasn't a huge fan. I think this is because I am and I was so very different in high school then Melinda is. I could never let myself fall between the cracks, and give up just because of an accident. She was in the wrong place at the wrong time. She needed to talk to someone and find help, and instead she went a whole school year without informing anyone to what happened. I would not read it again but I would recommend this book to middle school students because there are many traits that can relate to that age group. I feel many students can relate to the feeling of loneliness and the conflict with friends, especially as a teenager.